



If You're Tough Enough,
If You're Smart Enough, _____
If You Care Enough to Volunteer ...
Volunteer Today. Make Friends for Life.

Project: **VFIRE**

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WHAT IT IS:

VFIRE - the "Volunteer Firefighter Incentive for Recruitment and Education" program was created by the County of Erie to attract **new recruits** to the volunteer fire and emergency services. **VFIRE** scholarship recipients will receive **FREE** tuition at any of Erie Community College's (ECC) three campuses in return for volunteer service.

FEATURES:

- ❑ The VFIRE tuition scholarship program is available for **any** curriculum – not just fire protection technology or emergency medical services related coursework.
- ❑ VFIRE scholarships are available for funding up to four full-time semesters or 48 part-time credit hours
- ❑ VFIRE participants begin their service commitment immediately upon acceptance into the program and continue **after** receiving the maximum funding granted

HOW IT WORKS:

Step 1 – Candidate contacts local volunteer fire department, emergency squad or HazMat team and expresses their interest in volunteering.

Step 2 – Candidate completes fire department application, meets local membership prerequisites and is accepted into sponsoring agency (fire department.) Candidate starts serving sponsoring agency (fire department) and their community.

Step 3 – Sponsoring agency and candidate complete and forward VFIRE volunteer service commitment form to Scholarship Selection Committee along with a copy of the candidate's fire department application by **June 15, 2005**.

Step 4 – Student completes ECC admissions process including placement test, FAFSA form and is accepted for enrollment as a matriculated student.

Step 5 – Scholarship Selection Committee reviews nominations and awards scholarships to cover tuition only.

Step 6 – Student pre-pays ECC for their own tuition (and other fees) prior to the start of each semester.

Step 7 – Student continues actively serving sponsoring agency and their community while attending ECC. Fire Department reports whether recipient achieved training/participation objectives at end of each semester. ECC reports whether recipient achieved academic objectives (2.0 g.p.a.) at end of each semester.

Step 8 – Tuition **ONLY** is reimbursed to student (less other funds received for financial aid) upon achieving fire department training/participation objectives and ECC academic objectives for the previous semester.

Step 9 – Process continues each semester for up to four (4) semesters. The student, the sponsoring agency, Erie County Fire Safety and ECC monitor the student's educational **and** volunteer service progress throughout the entire program.

Step 10 – Student continues service commitment period **following** degree attainment or receipt of maximum funding.
**Students must fulfill the service obligation (determined by number of semesters or part-time credits funded) outlined in their signed contract (volunteer service commitment form) or must repay all money advanced for tuition.*

***Following these steps does not guarantee a scholarship but only establishes eligibility. Selection is based on the recruitment needs of the sponsoring agency. Other terms and conditions apply. See administrative guide for details.*

ELIGIBILITY:

ELIGIBLE Persons who enroll as **active** members of an Erie County volunteer fire department/fire company, volunteer fire district, volunteer ambulance corps/emergency squad, or volunteer hazardous materials response team **between June 1, 2004 and June 15, 2005**.

BENEFITS:

VFIRE benefits the volunteer fire departments by addressing both volunteer quantity **and** quality – giving the fire company the opportunity to attract education focused volunteers.

VFIRE keeps our young adults in the community while they achieve their education goals, preparing them to obtain better employment and allowing them to start giving back to their community – immediately.

For more information about this exciting scholarship program:
Click www.erie.gov/fire or fire@erie.gov or Call 716.681.7111